

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 8, 13,-14, 16 and 21-22 are pending herewith. Claims 4-7 and 9-12 are withdrawn.

1. Examiner Garcia is thanked for courtesies extended during a personal interview on May 19, 2009, the substance of which has been incorporated into the following remarks.

2. The drawings were objected to for informalities. Enclosed herewith are corrected drawing sheets in compliance with Rule 121(d) further identifying unformed annular portions 7. Based on the corrected drawing sheets, withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

3. The disclosure was objected to for informalities. The specification has been amended to consistently refer to feature 2 as inwardly facing protrusions, as requested in the last Office Action. Additionally, the noted claim language from claims 1 and 21 has been added to the specification and related to the drawings. See revisions to the first full paragraph on page 18 of the specification as filed.

4. Claims 1 and 21 were objected to for informalities. Applicants submit that the amendments herein to the claims address these objections.

5. Claims 1-3, 8 and 13-16 were rejected under §112, second paragraph. To address this rejection, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the unformed annular portions include an endmost, unformed annular portion to clarify the identity of the endmost portion. Based on the amendments to claim 1, withdrawal of the §112, second paragraph rejection is requested.

6. Claims 1-3, 8, 13, 14, 16, and 21 were rejected under §103 over Cramer et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Independent claims 1 and 21 have been amended herein to clarify particular features associated with the elected species, that shown in FIG. 4. Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the protrusions have a diameter and the guide portion terminates at a free end (see topmost axial edge or end of the tolerance ring 2, shown in FIG. 4), which defines an opening, that